

Amendment  
Appln. No.: 09/274,979

**REMARKS**

Claims 197-251 now stand in the application, claims 1, 3, 8, 10, 22, 23, 28, 29, 49, 50, 55, 56, 64, 65, 70-75, 90-101 and 110-117 having been canceled and new claims 197-251 added.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 70-75, 90-101 and 110-113. These correspond to respective claims 197-202, 217-228 and 237-240. Dependent claims 203-216, 229-236 and 247-251 depend from these allowed independent claims, so that all of claims 197-240 and 247-251 are believed in condition for allowance.

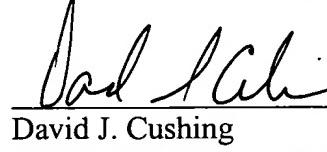
With regard to the objection to the objection to claims 114-117, submitted herewith is a replacement page 80 as requested by the examiner. This page is believed to have been included in the specification as originally filed, but in any event consists only of claims which are fully supported in the specification and correspond to claims 241-244 added above. No new matter is added by the addition of these claims. Claims 114-117 are directed to the use of a placeholder element representing the absence of data. This is not believed taught or suggested in the prior art, so that all of claims 241-246 are also believed in condition for allowance.

With the present application now including claims 197-251 corresponding to original claims 70-124, the remaining original claims 1-69 will be pursued in a continuation application.

With the amendments made above, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If there are any issues remaining which the examiner believes could be resolved through an Examiner's Amendment or a Supplemental Response, the examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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David J. Cushing  
Registration No. 28,703

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860  
Date: July 12, 2002

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**APPENDIX**  
**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Claims 197-251 are added as new claims**